

International Dialogue on Migration
28 February 2019
15:00 – 16:30 – Panel 3: Empowering youth to become actors of change

Ms. Aya Chebbi, African Union Youth Envoy

- Africa has most youthful population in the world projected to increase to 42% by 2030 and count for 2.4 billion young people by 2050
- Intra-African migration accounts for over 80 percent of all African migration. Africa is the host for largest population of migrants, displaced and refugees.
- Expected Migrant contributions to GDP amounted to 19 percent in Côte d'Ivoire in 2008, 9 percent in South Africa in 2011, and 13 percent in Rwanda in 2012.
- Four years ago, only five countries in the continent had adopted liberal visa policies for all African nationals; that number has now increased to 11 besides talks about an African passport
- Africa is sending a clear message to the world that based on our pan-African values we are integrating and opening our borders
- The Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) signals a commitment to facilitate socio-economic opportunities in Africa through intra- trade, single market and mobility, already signed by 52 countries and ratified by 19 countries
- Youth in Africa are already transforming the continent and changing the landscape in Africa not just demographically but politically, socially and economically.
- To empower youth we have to move from a disempowering discourse that portrays African youth as violent, as the problem, as negative numbers of unemployed, as the job seeker that need quick fix, the radicalized into violent extremism, the armed rebels etc. We need to start building a discourse of empowerment that reflects reality in africa where young people are not the problem but the solution and not just looking for opportunity but they creating opportunities.
- African Youth Charter (AYC), is a political and legal document to support policies, programmes and actions for youth development in Africa and serves as the strategic framework for youth empowerment, co-designed by youth themselves and adopted in 2006. My job now is to advocate for the implementation and support member states in engaging youth in the monitoring and evaluation
- Aspiration 6 of Africa Union's Agenda 2063 talks of - An Africa, whose development is people- driven, especially by women and youth.

- Youth inclusive participation and engagement has to be systematic, deliberate and meaningful not tokenistic.
- African youth migrants in Africa and outside are saying talk to us not about us
- National policies are far more likely to succeed if integrated youth voices which will bridge the policy and reality and policy and its implementation.
- Some of the ongoing initiatives at the AU aiming at empowering youth include:

1. The initiative of chairperson of the AU commission H.E Moussa Faki for meaningful engagement of Youth in the key areas of Employment, Entrepreneurship, Education and Engagement. We have an upcoming 4 days forum in April to start this process
2. The African Youth Volunteer Corps Programme – that recruits trains and deploys young professionals to serve in african countries other than their own for one year.
3. National, Regional and Continental Youth Consultation on 2019 Theme of the year by Africa Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat and Youth4Peace programme of Peace and Security department to ensure that youth perspectives and voices are mainstreamed and engaged at the RECs
4. Joint-labor migration program: looking at the labor and migration through skills portability, to harness the movement of youth who are migrating with their skills and education.

Recommendations:

- Engage young people in the policy formulation related to migration. Youth in their diversity are asking a very legitimate demand to be the co-designers of their own future. We cannot keep ignoring the migrant population that has a youth face
- Suggest to empower and facilitate a migrant youth voices network at regional and global levels
- Place African migrants and their wellbeing at the center of policy interventions acknowledging that Africans on the move are resourceful not passive victims of circumstances and that - African youth are drivers not subject of development
- We should start asking why young people are willingly dying in the Mediterranean. This means our generation has a deeper problem. Jobs alone will not address deep seated awareness of marginalization, experiences of inequality and perception of injustice. Youth want to live with dignity and want jobs with dignity.
- We have a shared responsibility on getting out our generation from the trap of waitthood, waiting for adulthood. Free movement and safe channels of migration should be a human right that offers youth the means to transition finally to adulthood